

In the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): An isolated ~~purified sphingosine 1-phosphate receptor protein gene having the sequence of SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:9, or SEQ ID NO: 13~~ nucleic acid molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): ~~A purified nucleic acid comprising a sequence of more than 100 base pairs that is, or is complementary to, at least 100 bases of SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:9, OR SEQ ID NO:13~~ An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:4.

Claims 3-5 (Canceled)

Claim 6 (Withdrawn-Currently amended): A method for screening for an autoimmune disease, comprising: providing a sample from a patient suspected of having an autoimmune disease; and screening said sample for over-expression of ~~sppr~~ the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn-Currently amended): The method of claim 6, in which said sample comprises RNA and said screening comprises measuring ~~sppr~~ mRNA of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 6, in which said disease is LGL or rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 10 (Canceled)

Claim 11 (Currently amended): A method of producing a recombinant ~~sppr~~ protein which comprises introducing ~~a base sequence containing the sppr protein gene of claim 1~~ the nucleic acid

molecule of claim 1 into a host to thereby transform said host, cultivating the thus-obtained transformant, and recovering the recombinant sppr protein thus produced.

Claim 12 (Currently amended): An expression vector ~~which contains a gene as claimed in claim 1~~ comprising SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 13 (Currently amended): A host cell which is transformed with ~~a vector as claimed in claim 12~~ an expression vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claims 14-16 (Canceled)

Claim 17 (Currently amended): An expression vector comprising the ~~nucleic acid molecule of claim 2~~ nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn-Currently amended): A method for screening for a neurodegenerative disease, comprising: providing a sample from a patient suspected of having a neurodegenerative disease; and screening said sample for over-expression of ~~sppr~~ the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn-Currently amended): The method of claim 18, in which said sample comprises RNA and said screening comprises measuring ~~sppr~~ mRNA of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (New): The method of claim 18, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 22 (New): The host cell of claim 13, wherein said expression vector comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 6, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 24 (New): The method of claim 11, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises SEQ ID NO:4.